

***Iowa Outdoors***  
**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
**www.iowadnr.gov**

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1. Late Muzzleloader Deer Season Closes Jan. 10, Final Deer Season Opens Jan. 11
2. The January Antlerless Season – the Finale of Iowa’s Deer Seasons
3. Contemporary Collectors Pay Big Bucks for Wooden Ducks – by Lowell Washburn [electronic photo available upon request]
4. International Snowmobile Safety Week
5. 2,000 Trout Headed to Bacon Creek Jan. 15
6. DNR offers Ways to Celebrate Family Fit Month
7. Existing Programs Deliver New Opportunities for Forest Landowners

**LATE MUZZLELOADER DEER SEASON CLOSES JAN. 10, FINAL DEER SEASON OPENS JAN. 11**

The Iowa late muzzleloader deer season comes to an end on Saturday, Jan. 10 and with it the final any deer season available to hunters. Beginning Sunday, Jan. 11, hunters in select counties where antlerless deer licenses are available may hunt antlerless deer with a shotgun, muzzleloader, bow or handgun through Jan. 25.

In the southern two tiers of Iowa counties, hunters may use center-fire rifles, in addition to the other legal methods of take.

Hunters participating in this January late antlerless season are reminded that they will need to purchase a new hunting license and pay the habitat fee for 2009, if they are normally required to do so in order to hunt. The 2008 licenses expire on Saturday, Jan. 10.

About 27,000 January antlerless-only season licenses were used in 2008.

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## **THE JANUARY ANTLERLESS SEASON – THE FINALE OF IOWA’S DEER SEASONS**

The January Antlerless deer season begins Sunday, January 11, in 59 Iowa counties mostly in southern and eastern Iowa. The season is designed to allow hunters one last opportunity to harvest antlerless deer, which is the most important component of the population management of deer herds. The season ends on January 25, 2009.

Shotguns, muzzleloaders, handguns and bows are legal equipment in all open counties and center-fire rifles (.24 caliber or larger) are legal in the 21 counties in the southern two tiers of state. Party hunting is legal and firearm hunters must wear blaze orange. Hunters are also reminded that beginning on January 11, 2009, a 2009 hunting license and Habitat Fee payment will be needed.

Currently, with the snow, ice, and cold that Iowa has already experienced the deer throughout the state are concentrated near higher quality food sources with waste grain in harvested fields and standing corn and soybeans being especially attractive. With the colder weather the deer have been feeding at consistent times and have often been visible well before sunset. Moderating temperatures (or extremely cold temperatures) may slow down this drive to feed and alter movement patterns somewhat but the animals will still remain fairly predictable unless a major snow or ice event changes the availability of food resources.

There are still thousands of antlerless licenses available for the January Antlerless season, although they are only available in parts of southern and northeastern Iowa. In northeastern Iowa, Winneshiek and Allamakee counties have licenses and a few are still available in Fayette County. In the more southern portions of the state, there are more than 20 counties with licenses available and 16 of these counties are counties in which center-fire rifles are legal to use.

Last year, about 27,000 antlerless licenses were issued for this season. Hunters reported killing about 9,000 deer. Does made up about 80 percent of the reported harvest which represented about 10 percent of Iowa’s doe harvest last year. This is significant, especially considering that the entire state is not open during this season. In many counties, the 2008 January Antlerless season increased doe harvests from 15 to 50 percent.

Shed-antlered bucks make up a small percentage of the January Antlerless season’s reported harvest. Typically, shed-antlered bucks represent about 4 percent of the harvest and last year, due to the early onset of severe winter weather, they represented 7 percent of the January Antlerless season harvest. This percentage was higher than normal, but shed-antlered bucks still represented only 4 percent of the total “adult” buck harvest for the 2007/08 season. In both the late muzzleloader and shotgun seasons of 2007/08, the numbers of shed-antlered bucks reported were similar to those of the January Antlerless season.

To date, during the 2008/09 deer hunting seasons, more than 200 fewer shed-antlered bucks have been reported and the proportion they represent of the “adult” buck harvest is lower as well. This is most likely due to the less severe weather conditions Iowa is experiencing this winter resulting in a lower proportion bucks that have shed their antlers.

Hunters can minimize the number of shed-antlered bucks killed during the January Antlerless season by not shooting lone animals and waiting for deer traveling in family groups (does and fawns). At this time of year, bucks can be found traveling together in small bachelor groups (typically 2 to 4 animals) but these groups will be made up of all adult deer. Because of differences in muscle mass, older bucks will move with a slower, more stiff-legged gait than does and have blockier, wider heads. Hunters can make good use of binoculars during this season (and all seasons) and forehead patches and antler pedicels are visible in good lighting conditions. In January, if a small group of adult deer contains even one antlered buck then usually all the animals in the group will be bucks. Currently, shed-antlered bucks are being observed throughout Iowa. However, the majority of bucks will shed their antlers after the end of January.

Deer populations are strong in central, northeastern, and southern Iowa with densities still above objectives. Hunters can help farmers and landowners by taking an antlerless deer or two during the season. Hunters can also utilize the HUSH program to donate deer to the Iowa Food Bank and provide needed meat for Iowans.

Hunting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. All deer taken must be reported using the harvest reporting system by midnight the day after the deer is recovered. This is the third year where hunters have reported their kill and it is a very important part of the deer management program in Iowa, playing a vital role in managing deer populations and hunting opportunities. Hunters can report their deer on the DNR website ([www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com)), by calling the toll free reporting number (1-800-771-4692), or also at a license vender. For hunters with Internet access, the online reporting of the harvest is a quick and easy way to register your deer.

**For more information, contact Tom Litchfield, state deer biologist at (641) 774-2958**

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[Electronic photo available upon request]

## **CONTEMPORARY COLLECTORS PAY BIG BUCKS FOR WOODEN DUCKS**

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The past century is often referred to by waterfowl hunters as America's Golden Age of Shotgunning. Although sky darkening clouds of ducks and geese indeed seemed limitless, hunters of yesteryear enjoyed little in the way of "store bought" equipment. Decoys, for example, were often hand carved from raw blocks of cedar, balsa, or cork. Most of these old time relics have been replaced by modern, lightweight plastic decoys. The relative handful of authentic old blocks that do remain are now highly prized by collectors. Once an old decoy is discovered, one of the greatest challenges lies in determining what the antique duck is really worth.

When it comes to identifying, appraising, or selling antique waterfowl decoys, Gary Guyette is the walking talking, real deal.

A resident of St. Michael, Md., Guyette has single handedly accounted for more than \$120 million in sales of collectable decoys during the past three decades. Along with partner Frank Schmidt, he currently manages Guyette & Schmidt Inc., the world's largest and most successful decoy auction house. When the world's most experienced collectors need council, Gary Guyette gets the call.

"Decoys are a fascinating subject and the number of people collecting old decoys continues to grow," says Guyette. "There are a lot of different reasons for buying a piece. Some people look at old working decoys as investments, while others purchase them strictly for their beauty. Some people purchase a particular decoy simply because it reminds them of a special hunt or a particular period in their childhood.

"It's really no surprise that interest in collecting decoys remains so high," says Guyette. "Each piece is literally a tangible example of classic American folk art.

"Although most decoys will increase in value, not all collectors are investors," notes Guyette. "Many people collect decoys simply as sculptures [art] and also for their historical value."

From a purely financial perspective, however, most collectable decoys do tend to increase in value, says Guyette. Generally speaking, the more you pay for a piece the faster it tends to appreciate. For exceptionally rare or unique decoys, initial prices can be staggering and record sales continue to be shattered.

In 2003, for example, Guyette sold a single preening drake pintail decoy [carved by Cape Cod market gunner Elmer Crowell] for the incredible sum of \$801,000. In 2007, he sold a feeding plover decoy for \$830,000, and a single antique merganser for a wallet flattening \$856 thousand. Later in '07, the Crowell pintail traded hands again [this time privately] and made national headlines by fetching an astounding \$1.13 million – the highest sum ever paid for a single decoy.

"Each decoy is unique in its own right," says Guyette. "When it comes to price, nothing really surprises me anymore."

Although hundred thousand or million dollar decoy sales are purely restricted to the rich and famous, decoy collecting is by no means limited to the Millionaire's Club.

"You certainly don't have to be rich to collect worthwhile bird decoys," notes Guyette. "People can still find beautiful pieces for under two hundred dollars, and you can purchase some extremely nice decoys for under \$500. For example, we [Guyette & Schmidt Inc.] are currently listing a 1948, mint condition, factory made wooden Wildfowler mallard for \$350. That same decoy would have sold for \$200 just a short time ago."

Not all decoys are created equal. To find out what Grand Dad's old wooden mallard is really worth [or to view other historic pieces currently listed on the market] send a single, profile photo of your decoy to: [decoys@guyetteandschmidt.com](mailto:decoys@guyetteandschmidt.com).

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## **INTERNATIONAL SNOWMOBILE SAFETY WEEK**

The Iowa DNR is joining the Iowa State Snowmobile Association (ISSA), the International Association of Snowmobile Administrators, and the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) in observance of International Snowmobile Safety Week, January 11 – 17.

“The purpose of International Snowmobile Safety Week is to expose people to safe snowmobiling practices and to demonstrate how operating safely can prevent mishaps,” said Ed Klim, ISMA President. “Snowmobiling is a fun and exciting family activity enjoyed by over four million people across the U.S. and Canada. The sport is a safe and an enjoyable form of recreation if done properly and with respect.”

In Iowa, more than 33,000 snowmobiles are registered each year and operated by men, women, and children of all ages. Depending on weather conditions, approximately 5,000 miles of snow-covered trails are maintained and groomed by snowmobile club volunteers across the state and enjoyed by a variety of winter recreationists.

“Safe snowmobiling means riding within your own capabilities, operating at safe and appropriate speeds for the terrain, and never drinking alcoholic beverages before or while driving,” said Gary McVicker ISSA President. “Always wear a helmet and adequate clothing, stay within designated riding areas, and always snowmobile with another person – never alone.”

A key factor to safe snowmobiling is providing education courses to youth riders. In Iowa, riders between the ages of 12 and 17 are required to take and pass a DNR-certified education course in order to operate a snowmobile on public land. The student certification card must be carried with the student when operating a machine. Riders between the ages of 12 and 15 are also required to be under the direct supervision of a qualified person.

Rhonda Fowler, education coordinator for the DNR Snowmobile and OHV Program, said Iowans are well-served by the ISSA member clubs who sponsor and actively teach the youth snowmobile education classes. “There is a 35-year history of the ISSA partnering with the DNR to build an impressive volunteer base which sustains the education program,” Fowler said.

Information about safe snowmobiling activities can be found at [www.snowmobile.org](http://www.snowmobile.org) and [www.iowasnowmobiler.com](http://www.iowasnowmobiler.com). For more information about the ISSA, contact Gary McVicker at 641-425-1375. DNR contact: Rhonda Fowler at 515-281-3208 or [Rhonda.Fowler@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Rhonda.Fowler@dnr.iowa.gov). Contributing to article content: Cameron Hanson, Managing Editor, Iowa Snowmobiler.

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## **2,000 TROUT HEADED TO BACON CREEK JAN. 15**

SIOUX CITY – Bacon Creek Lake will receive 2,000 catchable sized rainbow trout around 2 p.m., on Jan. 15. Bacon Creek Lake is one of a handful of Iowa lakes

outside of trout country that receive trout during the late fall, winter and early spring as part of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources cool weather trout stocking program.

Bacon Creek is a 34-acre lake on the east side of Sioux City and the only trout fishery in northwest Iowa.

Anglers are required to purchase a trout fee, in addition to a 2009 fishing license, to fish for trout in Iowa. The fee is \$11 for Iowa residents and \$13.50 for non-residents. 2008 Iowa fishing licenses expire on Jan. 10. There is a five fish daily bag limit and a 10 fish possession limit for trout.

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## DNR OFFERS WAYS TO CELEBRATE FAMILY FIT MONTH

DES MOINES — January is Family Fit Lifestyle Month, a perfect time to get the whole family involved in that New Year's resolution to get in shape. Keepers of the Land, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' volunteer program offers many opportunities to celebrate a fit lifestyle and help the earth be more fit as well.

- **Bald Eagle Nest Observation Opportunity:** Officials with the DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program are seeking volunteers to assist with reporting unidentified bald eagle nests and recording observations associated with the nest's location and usage. This opportunity is available immediately and is ongoing. For more information, contact Stephanie Shepherd at 515-432-2823 ext. 102.
- **Green Homes Green Communities Opportunity:** Officials with the DNR's Land Quality Bureau are seeking volunteers to assist with increasing awareness on reducing waste in their communities, schools, and businesses as well as organizing various reduce, reuse, recycle activities. This opportunity is available immediately and is ongoing. For more information contact, Tom Anderson at 515-281-8623.
- **Trail Sign Design Opportunity:** Officials at Green Valley State Park, near Creston, are seeking volunteers to assist with designing informative signs to place along existing trails and assist with their placement. This opportunity is available immediately and is ongoing pending project completion. For more information, contact Greg Haley, (641)782-5131.
- **Electrical and Plumbing Volunteer Opportunity:** Officials at the Big Creek State Park, near Polk City, are seeking volunteers to assist with plumbing or electric projects in the park. This opportunity is available immediately and is ongoing pending projects' completion. Volunteers would be benefited by having skilled experience with either plumbing or electric work. For more information, contact Kim Olofson at 515-984-6473.

Find more information about volunteer opportunities and events at [www.keepersoftheland.org](http://www.keepersoftheland.org).

**For more information, contact Jane Mild at (515) 242-6004 or at**

[jane.mild@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:jane.mild@dnr.iowa.gov) .

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## **EXISTING PROGRAMS DELIVER NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOREST LANDOWNERS**

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are delivering new opportunities for Iowa private landowners.

An announcement from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) stated that \$500,000 of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds will be set aside for forestry practices statewide in Iowa. Landowners interested in accessing these funds should contact their district forester if they need a forest management plan developed for their property. If they have a forest management plan they should sign up with your local NRCS office.

Because this sign-up is covered under the new Farm Bill, NRCS is currently developing the forms they will need to enroll cooperators. Landowners interested in enrolling in the program should ask their county office to place their name on a list to be contacted when the forms are prepared and sign-up can begin. Once sign-up begins it will be continuous until all funds are allocated.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that the Bottomland Hardwood Program (CP31) has added a 20 percent soil rental rate incentive, a practice incentive payment (PIP) and a sign-up incentive payment (SIP). This means that if your soil rental rate is \$200 per acre you would receive an additional \$40 per acre rental payment for a total of \$240 per acre each year for 15 years. The PIP pays an additional 40 percent cost-share incentive in addition to the 50 percent that is currently provided by CRP. The SIP payment is \$100 per acre.

FSA has also amended the soil rental rates for CRP. Rate increases range from \$1 to \$50 per acre with the majority of rates increasing \$20 to \$30 per acre. If you are interested in this continuous CRP practice contact your FSA, NRCS or district forester office.

Additionally, landowners in Allamakee, Clayton, Winneshiek and Fayette counties are eligible for participation in the CRP SAFE program. This program has incentives similar to the Bottomland Hardwood Program and provides landowners in these counties the opportunities to enroll tree planting acres through the continuous CRP.

Go to (<http://www.iowadnr.gov/forestry/district.html>) to find forester contact information or call 515/281-4924. If you need to reserve seedlings for a tree planting project contact the State Forest Nursery at 515/233-1161 or order online at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/forestry/nursery.html> .

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